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Some Aspects of Medicine and Literature.

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

I have decided to address you this morning on some aspects of the relationship of medicine and literature, a vast subject on which I can only touch very superficially in the time at my disposal.

Throughout the ages we find medicine and literature in close association, and even the early Egyptian papyri and the tablets of the Assyrio-Babylonian epoch have extensive reference to the medical science of the dawn of civilization.

The early medicine of Greece was largely the cult of Aesculapius, and his followers were an organized guild of physicians, the Asclepiads; the most famous of their temples were founded at Côs, Epidaurus, Cnidus, and Pergamus. These temples, skilfully constructed and laid out on wooded hills near mineral springs, became popular sanatoria, managed by trained priests. Their administration corresponded fairly closely to that of a modern health resort; the patient, after the sacrifice of a cock or a ram, was inducted in the rite of incubation or temple-sleep. This consisted of lying down in the sanctuary, where, during the night, the priest, in the guise of a god, presented himself before the patient to administer medical advice, if the patient happened to be awake. If he slept, as was usually the case, the advice came in the form of a dream, afterwards interpreted by the priest. The whole rite has been humorously described in the Plutus of Aristophanes, and in a more dignified way by Walter Pater in "Marius the Epicurean." Many auxiliary aids such as baths, massage, and graduated exercises were also employed.

It was from this cult that Hippocrates, the father of medicine, was descended. He was born on the island of Côs about 460 B.C., and received his medical education from his father. He dissociated medicine from philosophy and theurgy, and crystallized the knowledge of his predecessors into a systematic science. He likewise gave medicine the greatest moral inspiration it possesses. All that a man of genius could do for medicine, with no other instrument of precision than his own open mind, his keen senses, and his honesty, he accomplished, and his descriptions of disease are still models of their kind even to-day.

Hippocrates was not acquainted with experiment as an active science, and his central doctrine, the humoral pathology, has long since been discarded, but no one ever profited more fully from experience. Of a series of forty-two clinical cases in the writings of Hippocrates—the only record of its kind for the next seventeen hundred years—sixty per cent. are reported as fatal with typical sincerity.

Unlike Galen, the author has no remarks to make on his own cleverness at diagnosis or of the mistakes of his fellow-physicians. "I have written this deliberately," he says, "believing it is valuable to learn of unsuccessful experiments, and to know the cause of failure."

In literary style Hippocrates resembles the great classical writers of the period—

clear, simple, precise. The oaths, the law, and the discourse on the sacred disease, epilepsy, are the finest utterances of Greek medicine, and are informed with the spirit of the father of medicine, whether written by him or not.

The medicine of the Jewish people is found mainly in the Bible and the Talmud. In the Old Testament, disease is an expression of the wrath of God, to be remedied only by prayers, sacrifice, and moral reform. And it is God Who confers health and disease: "I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15: 26). The priests acted mainly as officers of health, but never as physicians, in relation to contagious disease. The physicians were in a class apart, of whom we read that Joseph "commanded the physicians to embalm his father." We also read that "Asa the king was diseased in his feet; yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians," and for his pains "he slept with his fathers" (II Chron. 16: 12, 13). There were professional pharmacists (Exodus 30: 25; Nehemiah 3:8) and professional midwives, who are mentioned in the cases of Rachel and Tamar, and particularly in the striking reference to the ancient Oriental usage of the obstetric chair in labour (Exodus 1: 16), where Pharaoh commanded the midwives to slay all Jewish infants of the male sex.

Amongst many medical references in the Old Testament are left-handedness (Judges 20: 16), acromegaly with supernumerary digits in the case of the son of Goliath (II Samuel 21: 20; I Chron. 20: 6), cardiac shock in precipitate labour (I Samuel 4: 19), epilepsy (Numbers 24: 4), fatal apoplexy after drunkenness (I Samuel 25: 36), and fatal heatstroke (II Kings 4: 18-20), while in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes there is to be found the most beautiful description of old age in English literature.

The principal interest in Biblical diseases lies in the extraordinary efforts made to prevent them. The ancient Hebrew was the founder of prophyllaxis. There was also a definite code of ritual hygiene, gradually enlarged from contact with other civilizations. As Neuberger rightly says, the chief glory of Biblical medicine lies in the institution of social hygiene as a science.

Let me conclude the Biblical references by quoting the well-known verses in St. Mark's Gospel (Mark 5: 25, 26), which should help to keep us humble:

"And a certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse."

After the destruction of Corinth in 146 B.C., Greek medicine may be said to have migrated to Rome. Before this migration, "the Romans," as the elder Pliny tells us, "got on for six hundred years without physicians." The proud Roman citizen, who had a household god for every disease, as well as for every known physiological function, despised the Greek physician as a mercenary for accepting compensation for his services.

Of the many Latin writers, Horace has something to say of the doctors and medicine of his day. An author of the Augustan age, Horace was a great wit and lyric poet, a satirist of Roman manners and morals, and the boon companion of

Augustus and his prime minister. It is a remarkable fact that nowhere in his extant writings is there a word of unkindness or ridicule of the profession of medicine. Like Virgil, he was a martyr to poor digestion, and must therefore have been frequently in contact with the physicians of his day. He was accustomed to spend his winters at Baiæ, the fashionable winter resort of the wealthy Romans. In the Epistles he sings:

"Should winter swathe the Alban fields in snow,
Down to the sea your poet means to go
To nurse his ailments, and in cosy nooks
Close huddled up, to loiter o'er his books."

When Antonius Musa achieved great honour by curing the Emperor Augustus of a severe illness by means of cold baths, poor Horace is ordered to give up his visits to Baiæ and proceed to take cold baths at Salernum in mid-winter. He shivers at the thought, but he utters no word of reproach, and goes. Like other people, Horace hates to be out of fashion. Here is his ideal of happiness:

"Let your digestion be but sound,
Your side unwrung by spasm or stitch.
Your foot unconscious of a twitch,
And could you be more fully blessed
Tho' of the wealth of kings possessed?"

Juvenal, who lived from A.D. 20-100, a distinguished lawyer, strict in life and morals, and intolerant of the vices of others, approaches the customs and manners of the Romans from the standpoint of a prosecuting counsel (E. F. Cordell). Bearing upon the daily experiences of medical men in Rome as they went about visiting their patients in the first century A.D., may be quoted a description by Juvenal of the conditions of the streets and houses and the insecurity of life in Rome.

"A thousand perils environ the citizens of this fell city. How unsafe is the condition of the dark houses, many of them supported by props, which do not prevent their frequent collapse. Owing to the great noise in the streets, none but the rich can sleep, and many an invalid dies from want of rest. For a stream of carriages is continually passing in the narrow, crowded thoroughfares, and the drivers are perpetually engaged in noisy disputes and foul abuse of one another. If you are in haste, your passage is obstructed by the crowd. A rich man's litter borne aloft on stout shoulders jostles you aside. Your legs are bespattered with mud; on all sides you are trodden on. The cooks scatter burning coals as they hurry by with a patron's meal, and your clothing is torn to shreds. One wagon loaded with a fir-tree, another with a huge pine, shake the streets as they advance, the ends waving to and fro, threatening the passer-by. Then there are the dangers of the night, when broken crockery thrown from lofty windows makes dents in the pavement and threaten's to break one's skull. Rash will he be thought who goes out to supper without having made his will."

Recently Dr. J. D. Rolleston has drawn attention to the medical allusions in the Greek Anthology. It is a remarkable fact that a work described by John Addington

Symonds as "from some points of view the most valuable relic of ancient literature we possess," should have received so little attention from medical writers.

The poems of medical interest extend over a period of nearly fifteen centuries, beginning with Empedocles and Simonides in the fifth century B.C., and ending in the tenth century A.D. Altogether over four hundred of the whole four thousand deal more or less directly with medical subjects.

The lines of Nicharchus recall the equally cruel attacks of Martial:

"If you have an enemy, Dionysius, don't call upon him the wrath of Isis, nor of any god that makes men blind, but invoke Simon, and you will learn what a god can do, and what Simon."

Some epigrams are directed against surgeons. In the following two by Nicharchus, allusion is made to orthopædic operations:

"Socles, having promised to straighten the humpback Diodorus, placed three heavy square stones on his spine. The humpback was crushed and died, but he became as straight as a rule."

Again, "Agelaus killed Akestorides while operating upon him." "The poor wretch," said he, "was bound to limp if he had lived."

There is grim humour in the following epigram: "A young man hung a garland on the column of his stepmother's tomb, thinking that in death her character had changed. But the column fell and killed the young man. Children of a former marriage, beware your stepmother's grave!" An epigram of Erycius is of special interest, as it mentions amputation for gangrene and the employment of an artificial leg in the second century A.D.: "While cutting down a dry old tree, unhappy Mindon, a hidden spider bit you in the left foot, springing up from below, and black gangrene devoured down to the bone the livid flesh. Your strong leg was cut off, and now one of your limbs is the branch of a tall olive."

Martial's epigrams mirror, as a whole, the everyday life of Imperial Rome in the second half of the first century A.D. Allusions to medicine are not numerous, according to Raymond Crawfurd, but they afford just those living touches which reanimate the dry bones of medical history. In those days there was no compulsory curriculum, no diploma, no General Medical Council, no healthy public sentiment, to restrain professional obliquity. Some sort of clinical teaching was evidently attempted, but if it was of advantage to the student, it brought little comfort to the patient, according to Martial:

"I lay ill, but soon Symmachus sought me
With a class of a hundred young men,
Whose hundred cold paws have brought me
The fever I lacked till then."—(*Crawfurd*).

Oculists again come in for the full measure of Martial's satire. Here is a skit on the oculist's skill:

"Blear-eyed Hylas yesterday
To pay your fee was willing;
Now one eye is gone he may
Halve the previous shilling.

Quintus, take it greedily,
Profit by the occasion,
When he's blind, he'll certainly
Try complete evasion."—(*Crawfurd*).

According to Martial, false teeth were frequently worn to improve the appearance rather than to aid mastication. Thus :

"You, Fidentinus, court a poet's crown
By passing off my verses as your own.
So Aegle counterfeits reality
With teeth of bone and Indian ivory."—(*Crawfurd*).

In several epigrams Martial holds up the malingerer to ridicule. Disease is very apt to be simulated for the sympathy it excites and the service it exacts. In Rome there was the added attraction of congratulatory presents on recovery to increase its prevalence. Thus :

"You're sick ten times or oftener every year.
Tho' yours the sickness, we the suffering bear.
At each recovery for gifts you call.
Fie, Polycharmus, sicken once for all"—(*Crawfurd*).

Many passages in Lucian illustrate the prestige in which the medical profession was held in the second century A.D., according to J. D. Rolleston. Several references are made to oculists, but they are not of a satirical character, as in the case of Martial and the Greek Anthology. Lucian frequently refers to alcoholism and its prevalence. Other passages testify to the unpopularity of the water-drinker. One reason for the dislike of the cynics was that they drank water "just like animals." Once the philosopher Demetrius was accused before Ptolemy of drinking water during the Bacchanalia. He only saved his life by being drunk from an early hour the following morning.

Lucian has also many satirical things to say of cosmetics. The following will serve as an example in which the toilet of a lady of fashion is portrayed :

"Countless different drugs are used to doctor their wretched faces, for it is not a stream of pure water into which they plunge their faces to wash off their deep sleep, nor do they set about any useful occupation. They mix together numerous pastes to give a lustre to their disagreeable skin. As in a public procession, each servant has some special duty to perform, one carrying a silver basin, another a jug, and a third a mirror. The room is filled like a chemist's shop with boxes containing numerous deceitful compounds, some to clean the teeth, others to darken the eyebrows. Some dye their hair like wool, others with colours as bright as the sun at noonday. Those who think dark hair becomes them best spend their husband's money in scenting themselves with Arabian perfumes. They shamelessly paint their cheeks so as to animate, by bright colours, the excessive pallor of their skin."—(*Amores,* 39-41.)

The Western Roman Empire lasted five hundred years; the Eastern, centred at Byzantium, over one thousand years until 1453. With the growth of luxury and vice, in that state of society "where wealth accumulates and men decay," the

Roman could not hold his own with the wily Greek and the subtle Oriental, while the vigorous Northern tribes were knocking at the outposts of the empire. Like those English colonists in Ireland who became proverbially *"Hibernis ipsis Hiberniores"* (more Irish than the Irish), the Roman fell under that strange law by which the conqueror is assimilated by the conquered.

The general state of Europe up till the ninth century was one of priest-ridden terror, of abandonment of intelligence to gross superstition, of abysmal ignorance. There was a paralysis of thought, something like insanity, in the world.

Into the darkness there gradually penetrated the faint but steady light of Salerno, which remained for nearly two hundred years, finally expiring in the fog of the early Middle Ages. Salerno, a town in Southern Italy, famous for its climate and utilized by the Romans as a health resort, became the nucleus of medical education; and the romance of it lies in the harmony of medicine and literature which it cultivated. Salerno raised the healing art from the decrepitude and decay of half a millenium, infused new life and thought into Europe, and guarded the best traditions of ancient practice. Very little is actually known of the school, except that it was an isolated institution, and its medical teaching came upon the world like a refreshing and invigorating breeze from the sea. Salerno was eminently sane, preferring experience to conjecture, and centring a healthy interest in the body, not in vague research into the nature of the soul. The Greek spirit and, indeed, probably something of the Greek language, lingered on at Salerno, when it was choked by the weeds of barbarism everywhere else (Gosse).

With the Reformation the intellectual world was in labour, in the throes of delivery from the domination of the Church, from the blind acceptance of the authority of ancient writers, and from the restrictions imposed by the universal use of the classical languages. Six years after Luther had burned the papal bull at Wittenburg, Paracelsus, the great iconoclast, burned the works of Galen and of the Arabian doctors Averröes and Avicenna in a brazier at Basle before beginning his lectures.

France produced the foremost surgeon of this epoch in Ambrose Paré (1510-90). As Paget his biographer says, a man like Paré is welcome whenever he comes. Poorly educated, he began his surgical career as an apprentice barber at the *Hôtel Dieu* in Paris. He rose to great eminence as surgeon to four French kings. At the massacre of St. Bartholomew he was one of the few Protestants spared by Charles IX, who exclaimed, as he shot with his arquebus at his less distinguished subjects: "This man could be of service to a small world."

Paré's published works passed through many editions, and they include an account of his travels as a military surgeon, one of the most lively and entertaining descriptions of military operations to be found in medical literature. Paré almost ostentatiously wrote in French, and his fellow-physicians tried to suppress his works on the ground that they were in the vulgar tongue and in very intelligible language. The great man replied in words which we recall with pride and satisfaction:

"The more our good science of medicine is known, the more it will be loved and will deserve to be loved."

In England the labours of the Reformation were incomplete. The Church still had the power of licensing to practise midwifery, and the London College of Physicians from time to time punished those who dared to doubt the authority of Galen. The literary style of the writings of the sixteenth century is the high-pitched, garrulous manner found in Paracelsus, Bacon, and other writers of the Renaissance. The prose of the Elizabethan physicians is described by Matthew Arnold as Corinthian, the prose of "those whose reason has not cleared itself." Even in Bacon's major works the prose is frequently bewildering, and is far inferior to his essays in medical interest and in literary merit. Two of his essays are medical in content, and in one of them he anticipates the inferiority complex of Adler. It has been satirically said of Bacon's prose that "it was like the peace of God, . . ."

Over the mantelpiece in Sir Wm. Osler's library in Baltimore there stood a panel of portraits of Linacre, Harvey, and Sydenham, bearing the legend: "Literature, Science, Practice."

Linacre, the first man of letters in English medicine, was primarily a grammarian. He founded the Royal College of Physicians in 1508, and was physician to Henry VIII, Wolsey, Thomas More, and Erasmus, but he gave up a rich practice and took Orders, to devote himself entirely to the revival of learning in England. The influence of Linacre on English medicine was decisive, and with him English medicine became a going concern.

In Chaucer, the physician, or doctor of physic, appears for the first time as an individual character, of whom it is said that "he was grounded in astronomye," "a very parfait practisour," who "knew all the medical writings of his day," but "whose studie was but littel on the Bible." The last line, "Therefore he loved gold in special," refers to the proverbial avarice of the mediæval physician.

The English prose of the Elizabethan era was definitely inferior in quality, but the blank verse of the great dramatists of the period has proved to be a highly efficient medium for the expression of scientific thought and medical teaching. All the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists are saturated with the medical thought of the time. Shakespeare refers to doctors and physicians forty-six times, according to Macleod Yearsley. Thus:

> "Now put it, God, in the physician's mind,
> To help him to his grave immediately."
>
> —Richard II, i, 4.

> "He and his physicians
> Are of a mind. He, that they cannot help him.
> They, that they cannot help."
>
> —All's Well, i, 3.

In Timon of Athens, iv, 3, occurs the passage:

> "Trust not the physician;
> His antidotes are poison, and he slays
> More than you rob."

It is an amazing fact that while disparagement and even gross abuse of the practice of physic and physicians is prominent in all the dramatists of the Eliza-

bethan period, Shakespeare has only one hostile criticism, quoted above, which is put into the mouth of the railing, crazy misanthrope, Timon. It would therefore appear that Shakespeare regarded the physicians in a different light. It may be that his connection with Dr. Hall, his son-in-law, influenced his judgment, but one would rather believe that it was due to the marvellous discernment and estimation of mankind which characterizes his genius.

Ben Jonson is a notable sinner against the profession. He says :

"Most of your doctors are the greater danger
And worse disease to escape."

—Volpone, i, 1.

And in the Poetaster (v, 1) :

"You make no more haste now than a beggar upon pattens; or a physician to a patient that has no money."

One exception may be quoted in Massengers' Virgin Martyr, where the distracted father welcomes the physician to the bedside of his son, and exclaims :

"O you that are half gods that lengthen life,
Their deities lend us. Turn o'er all the volumes
Of your mysterious Aesculapian science
To increase the number of this young man's days."

Haywood in his English Traveller (iii, 3) foreshadows the cocktail habit in—

"I vow we'll drink a cup of sack together.
Physicians say it doth prepare the appetite
And stomach against supper."

Beaumont and Fletcher (Thierry and Theodoret) suggest a common medical inconsistency in the following :

"As physicians,
When they are sick of fevers, eat themselves
Such viands as by their directions are
Forbid to others, though alike diseased."

The Hippocratic aphorism about simultaneous pains in different parts of the body is very simply expressed by Shakespeare :

"One pain is lessened by another's anguish"—Romeo and Juliet, i, 2;

and :

"But where the greater malady is fixed
The less is scarcely felt."

—King Lear, iii, 4.

In Macbeth, two unnamed doctors, English and Scottish, are introduced, the latter being the more important character. At his first entrance in the sleep-walking scene he watches his patient closely, observes her every action, and narrowly questions the gentlewomen-in-waiting. He does not scruple to confess his ignorance in such cases :

"This disease is beyond my practice; yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds."

Again :

"Foul whisperings are abroad; unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles; infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician."

When asked whether he cannot "minister to a mind diseased," the physician replies with true Scottish caution:

"Therein the patient
Must minister to himself."

On Macbeth's exit, he soliloquises upon the inadequacy of fees in such difficult and dangerous cases:

"Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here."

Like the physicians, the surgeons came under the scourge of Elizabethan dramatists. Thus in Kyd's Arden:

"No sooner came the surgeon in at doors
But my master took to his purse and gave him money";

and Middleton in The Witch (ii, 1):

"Pray heaven the surgeon and the apothecary
Keep out! and then 'tis well";

or:

"You cannot torture me worse than the surgeon does."—The Witch, v, 1.

One outstanding passage is found in Green's Notable Discovery of Cozenage, expressing a truth which still holds good to-day:

"Three properties that a good surgeon should have: an eagle's eye, a lady's hand, and a lion's heart:"

It may truly be said that Elizabethan blank verse justifies the dictum of Alfred Noyes that "there is no precision like the precision of great poetry."

One may perhaps quote here the opinion of an Elizabethan, one Timothy Kendall, compiler of "The Flowers of Epigrammes in 1577" (Parkes Weber), on the physicians of his time:

"Three faces the Phisition hath.
First as an angel he
When he is sought; next when he helps
A god he seems to be;
And last of all, when he has made
The sick, diseased well,
And asks his guerdon, then he seems
An oughly fiend of Hell."

It is interesting to consider for a moment what manner of men were the physicians of the Elizabethan era. Physicians were men of good education who usually took degrees at foreign universities, such as Basle, Leyden, Montpellier, or Padua. The physician's fee appears to have been one angel (about ten shillings) a visit; and hence Culpeper said: "Physicians of the present day are like Balaam's ass. They will not speak until they see an angel."

For ordinary diseases the physicians had a sufficiency of drugs, which they administered in large doses. De Mayerne had a pill with thirty-six ingredients, and Montaigne complains of a pill with one hundred-odd ingredients, and asks, "What rock could withstand so great a battery? And yet," says he, "I hear from those who have tried it that not the least atom of gravel will stir for it."

De Mayerne was one of the best-known physicians of the period, and on one occasion he attended a great friend, who had tentatively placed two broad gold pieces on the table, but did not expect the doctor to take them. De Mayerne promptly pocketed the money, and to his protesting friend he said : "This morning I made my will, and if it should be found that I refused to take a fee, they would say I was *non compos.*"

In the seventeenth century there is an end of the redundant quality of Elizabethan medical prose, which abounds in quaint imagery and ornate circumlocution. This type is perhaps best illustrated in the works of Sir Thomas Browne, one of the outstanding personalities in pure literature, who practised medicine as a profession and wrote books as a recreation. The storms of the Civil War raged about him, but he remained undisturbed at his country seat. A king lost his throne and his head, while Sir Thomas seized the opportunity to write of ancient things. His best-known work, "Religio Medici," was written to defend himself and his professional brethren from the age-long imputation of irreligion. We remember him as a serene, happy old gentleman, who in spirit never passed from the shadows of Oxford's dreaming spires. He is so modest that he is quite willing to bring up the rear in heaven, so charitable that he can sympathize with all humanity. He can endure all theological systems—*mirabile dictu* in that or any other age—and can picture in the hereafter a life of toleration where one limbo would be reserved for the virtuous heathen.

His style is majestic, with its old-world Latinisms, its stately and noble rhythm. To Sir Wm. Osler "Religio Medici" was next to his Bible, and went with him all the way, *comes viæ vitæque,* and when finally he was laid to rest, he was robed in the scarlet gown of Oxford with this book clasped in his hand.

In contrast, the writings of Harvey and Sydenham have acquired something of Puritan sobriety and economy. In their hands English prose was already becoming an effective means of expressing scientific thought. This simple, plain, direct mode of expression is perhaps best exemplified in the beautiful prose of the King James's Bible of 1611.

Sir Thomas Browne wrote in English, but the profession were slow to accept the vulgarization of medicine.

There was long a suspicion of all attempts to bring literature and the medical profession together, which culminated in the case of Sir Richard Blackmore. Blackmore was a painstaking and diligent physician who in 1695 produced an epic poem which fell like thunder on literary society. The poem, "Prince Arthur," is entirely vapid and futile, but it was widely read and savagely attacked. And it was attacked because a physician wrote it. Two years later he published another epic on King Arthur, and stated in his preface that it was composed in the midst of his medical

work. This confession did not escape the wits, and King William III's epic physician was immortalized in the couplet :

"At leisure hours in epic song he deals,
Writes to the rumbling of his coach's wheels."

This was the last occasion on which the question of a doctor writing verses is seriously raised in England, and the final barrier was broken down by the publication two years later, in 1699, of "The Dispensary," by Sir Samuel Garth, a typical physician and poet. He had a fashionable practice in St. James's, and in his leisure hours he took part on a footing of perfect equality with the most eminent wits of the coffee-houses. This was a new thing. He was a poet amongst poets, and a physician among physicians (Gosse).

Pre-eminent among the literary physicians was Dr. John Arbuthnot, whose name will always live at least in the famous outburst of Pope's gratitude :

"Friend of my life, which did you not prolong,
The world had wanted many an idle song."

Arbuthnot succeeded Garth among the wits as "our best-natured man." He was a recognized leader of the medical profession, but it was in the company of authors that he was most at home, and we find among his intimates Gay, Steele, Parnell, Atterbury, and Congreve. Arbuthnot was an Aberdonian in practice at Epsom, and he owed his success to an accident. Prince George was taken ill suddenly, and no court physician being at hand, Arbuthnot was called in and cured the royal patient. Queen Anne made him Physician-in-Ordinary, and for twenty-five years he held a high place in the circle of the writers and wits. He is still remembered by the irony of "The History of John Bull," immortalized in "Punch," and by "The Art of Historical Lying."

Seventeenth-century medicine has been widely abused and caricatured in literature, but it was left to two Frenchmen, Lesage and Molière, to give us the most scathing commentaries on the doctors of the period. In "Gil Blas," Lesage has created an immortal character in Dr. Sangrado, whom he describes as "a tall, withered, wan executioner." After removing six good porringers of blood from the old licentiate Pedrillo, he says to Gil Blas : "It is a mere vulgar error that the blood is of any use in the system; the faster you draw it off, the better." Later, as the old man is dying, Gil Blas is sent to the notary, who asked what physician attended the licentiate. On hearing Dr. Sangrado's name he cried : "Let us make haste, by heavens, for that doctor is so expeditious he does not give his patients time to call members of my fraternity. He has done me out of many wills."

No one has ever been so sarcastic as Molière, and he ridiculed the pomposity, presumption, pedantry, and cupidity of contemporary medical men in a considerable number of his thirty comedies. Molière perhaps had some excuse, as he suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis, and he died from a severe hæmoptysis just after leaving the theatre where he was playing in the "Malade Imaginaire," the most scathing of his comedies in condemnation of doctors.

One might also mention here Sterne's famous but unjust satire of Dr. John Burton in the character of Dr. Slop in "Tristram Shandy." A political feud between

the Tory Burton and the Whig Jacques Sterne and his nephew Laurence was the cause of the satire. Burton, who founded York Hospital, and invented a pair of midwifery forceps, wrote a "Treatise on the Non-Naturals," the old medical term for the six things necessary to health but liable to become the cause of illness by abuse or accident. This excited the ridicule of Sterne, who could not understand why the most natural actions of a man's life should be called his non-naturals. Rolleston relates that the resurrectionists unconsciously avenged this attack on a distinguished obstetrician by exhuming Laurence Sterne's body and selling it to Cambridge for dissection by future doctors. A crude form of poetic justice!

In the reigns of William III, Queen Anne, and George I, men such as Addison or Congreve could not have lived on the money made by the sale of their writings. Yet there was never a time when the rewards of literary merit were so high, or when authors found such easy admittance into distinguished society and to the greatest honours of the State. Congreve had scarcely attained his majority when he was rewarded for his first comedy with places which made him independent for life.

Locke was a Commissioner of Appeals and of the Board of Trade.

Swift, but for his unconquerable dislike of the Queen, would have been a bishop. Steele was a Commissioner of Stamps, and Addison was a Secretary of State.

Soon after the accession of the House of Hanover, a change took place. The supreme power passed to Sir Robert Walpole, who cared nothing for poetry or eloquence. He paid little attention to books and less to authors.

This was the condition of affairs when Oliver Goldsmith, the greatest literary doctor of the eighteenth century, made his appearance in London. The season of rich harvests was over and famine had begun. All that is miserable and squalid could be summed up in the word 'author.' He lived up four flights of stairs, dined with footmen out of a place, and was chased by bailiffs from one haunt of beggary to another. Such was Goldsmith's experience, and here is what he says to his friends in Ireland of his own lodgings :

> "The window, patched with paper, lent a ray
> That feebly showed the state in which he lay.
> The sanded floor, that grits beneath the tread,
> The humid walls with paltry pictures spread.
> The seasons, framed with lasting, found a place,
> And Prussia's monarch showed a lamp-black face.
> The morn was cold; he views with keen desire
> A rusty grate unconscious of a fire.
> An unpaid reckoning on the frieze is scored
> And five cracked teacups dressed the chimney board."

Goldsmith, disfigured by smallpox, a blockhead at school, "a plant that flowered late," as Johnson says, was said to have been refused by medicine, by the teaching profession, by law, and by the Church. The story goes that the bishop before whom he appeared for ordination bluntly stated that a candidate clad in scarlet breeches must be constitutionally unadapted to holy orders. Recent research, as reported by Sir Ernest Clarke, has shown that Goldsmith did qualify M.B. in Dublin, and there

is an extract in the "Oxford Journal" of 18th February, 1769, unearthed by Osler, which reads : "Yesterday Oliver Goldsmith, Esq., Bachelor of Physic in the University of Dublin, was admitted in congregation to the same degree in this university." If he failed in medicine, how well he succeeded in literature ! His essays approach those of Charles Lamb in simplicity and charm. His play, "She Stoops to Conquer," is still acted before delighted audiences. "The Traveller" and "The Deserted Village" have given him a definite place among English poets, while his novel, "The Vicar of Wakefield," contains the portrait of one of the best-loved characters in English fiction. But he was no more beloved than the generous, simple, kind, improvident man who created him, one of the great names in English literature, if not in English medicine, and the friend of Samuel Johnson, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Boswell, Garrick, and Churchill. You remember Johnson's well-known kindness to Goldsmith in his need. "One morning," he says, "I received a message from Goldsmith that he was in great distress. I sent him a guinea, and said I would come directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for arrears of rent, and he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork in the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He told me he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked at it and saw its merit, told the landlady I should return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for £60. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating the landlady soundly for having used him so ill." The novel was "The Vicar of Wakefield."

Garrick on one occasion wrote his epitaph :

"Here lies Poet Goldsmith, for shortness call Noll,
Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

This was true, but however poor with his tongue, Goldsmith was a master with his pen, and he got his own back in the little poem called "Retaliation" :

"Here lies David Garrick, describe him who can,
An abridgement of all that was pleasant in man.
As an actor, confessed without rival to shine,
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line.
Yet with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
The man had his failings, a dupe to his art.
Like an ill-judging beauty, his colours he spread
And beplastered with rouge his own natural red.
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,
'Twas only that, when he was off, he was acting."

You will remember Dr. John Browne of Edinburgh, pupil of the famous Syme and author of "Rab and His Friends," that delightful book of sketches. The memoir of his father is as fine as any in the English language. He is author, too, of that classic of childhood, "Marjorie Fleming," the wee wifie who was the devoted friend of Sir Walter Scott. She is revealed in her letters and journals, this little girl

with her quaint philosophy and her bad spelling, her confession of sins, and personal views of the devil, who made her behave so badly in church and who must have something to do with the multiplication tables she finds so difficult. She says that seven times seven is devilish, but eight times eight more than human nature can endure. Perhaps I may be permitted to quote the child's observation on the comparative psychology of turkeys, which is as fresh to-day as when she wrote it before her death at the age of eight :

"Three turkeys fair their last have breathed,
And now the world for ever leaved,
Their father and their mother too,
They sigh and weep the same as you.
Indeed the rats their bones have crunched,
Into Eternity they're launched.
A direful death indeed they had
As wad put any parent mad;
But she was more than usual calm,
She did not give a single dam."

"We fear 'she' is the abandoned mother," is Dr. Browne's comment.

Of the great English physicians and surgeons of the later eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, Jenner had a dull literary style, while John Hunter, one of the three great surgeons of all time, was almost inarticulate in the expression of his thought. He could, however, write to the point when occasion demanded, as the following letter to his brother William shows :

"Dear Brother,—The bearer is very anxious of having your opinion. I do not know his case. He has no money, and you don't want any, so that you are well met."

Rolleston mentions a quaint literary doctor, R. G. Latham, who brought out a textbook on the English language a year before he qualified. He also edited Johnson's Dictionary. He was a peculiar character, logical mentally, but quite illogical in action, and he was always in financial difficulties. He is reputed to have frequently approached his friends, and, laying a hand on the victim's shoulder, he would say : "Will you kindly lend me a sovereign that you will never see again?"

One of the leading literary figures of the nineteenth century was Oliver Wendell Holmes. He began general practice in Boston with the motto that the smallest fever would be thankfully received, and for thirty-five years he was Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Harvard. He occupied, as he said, not a chair, but a whole settee. As a lecturer he was so successful that he was given the last hour of the day, because no one else in the faculty could keep the students awake. In the "Breakfast Table" series we see the author himself as a kindly old humorist regarding the world and its people from every angle, but always with sympathy and understanding.

His sympathy is well expressed in the following quotation : "There is nothing men will not do, there is nothing they have not done, to recover their health and save their lives. They have submitted to be half drowned in water and half choked

in gases, to be buried up to their chins in earth, to be seared with hot irons like galley-slaves, to be crimped with knives like codfish, to have needles thrust into their flesh and bonfires kindled on their skin, to swallow all sorts of abominations, and to pay for all this, as if to be singed and scalded were a costly privilege, as if blisters were a blessing and leeches a luxury. What more can be asked to prove their honesty and sincerity?"

In the novels of Dickens we find a great deal of medical interest, and we are amazed at his knowledge of the professional medical life of his day. Most of the characters in Dickens have been examined by Sir Squire Sprigg, who remarks on their deformity and twisted nature, both in body and mind, and Dickens was instinctively right to make them act in defiance of all recognized standards of reason. The one outstanding characteristic of the genius of Dickens is his power of observation of physical and mental phenomena, and his psychology was far in advance of his time. He is an unconscious pathologist in the streets of London, storing up memories of quaint features, crooked anatomies, and disordered gaits with amazing accuracy (Sprigg). He is not in the least flattering to medicine, and no doctor plays more than a subsidiary part in any of his larger works. He draws them in a spirit of amiable if extensive caricature. On the other hand, his medical students and nurses—Bob Sawyer and Benjamin Allen, Sairey Gamp and Betsy Prig, are as well known as Micawber or Mr. Pickwick himself. Regarding nurses, he helped to rescue society from the ministrations of the hopeless class into whose hands the calling of nursing was committed. As Sprigg says, society owes Dickens a debt of gratitude for having buried the nurse-hag under inextinguishable laughter.

George Eliot, in "Middlemarch," puts in the mouth of one of her characters an opinion now fortunately out of fashion : "I like a medical man more on a footing with the servants. They are often all the cleverer. I assure you I found poor Hicks' judgment unfailing. I never knew him wrong. He was coarse and butcher-like, but he knew my constitution." It is interesting to note that the character of Tertius Lydgate in this story is a full-length portrait of Sir Clifford Allbutt, whom George Eliot met in 1868 when he was thirty-two years old.

The literary tradition in English medicine may be said to have culminated in the two regius professors of medicine at Oxford and Cambridge, Osler and Allbutt, whom Osler facetiously dubbed "the brothers regii." Their literary efforts were largely devoted to the history of medicine. In this field Allbutt was the profounder scholar of the two, and his "Greek Medicine in Rome," written when he was over 80, is a masterpiece of erudition and clear thinking. In his book on the composition of scientific papers, he enlarges on Sheridan's witticism that "Easy writing is damned hard reading," and says : "It must not be supposed that mere literary form is but a toilette, a skin-deep quality. The student is apt to think that an easy style comes of letting himself go. He is unaware that an easy, limpid, consecutive style is the result of consummate craftsmanship. No quality was won by more labour than the ease of Montaigne." As Pope puts it :

"True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance."

Gilbert Murray, the great classicist, said of Osler that he represents in a peculiar way the learned physician who was one of the marked characters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and he stands for that type of culture which we do not wish to see die out in the world. The culture of a man who, while devoting himself to his special science, keeps nevertheless a broad basis of interest in letters of all kinds. In his presidential address at Oxford on the "Old Humanities and the New Science," Osler apologized for his small Latin and less Greek. To us he seems well versed in both, for he had absorbed their culture and bathed himself in their spirit. He far surpassed the *sine qua non* of Bagehot, that any writer of English, if he knew not Latin and Greek, must at least have a strong suspicion that both languages existed. In this address Osler reveals himself as a true humanist, and pleads for that civilization which Hippocrates pictured, in which love of humanity, philanthropia, shall be joined with love of craft, philotechnia, and so wisdom, philosophia, shall be justified of her children. Equanimity, he taught, is the way of life, and work is his master-word. With these as guards, one may bear success with humility, affection of friends without pride, and be ready when the day of sorrow and grief comes to meet it with the courage befitting a man.

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THE MATER INFIRMORUM HOSPITAL, BELFAST

THE Medical School of the Mater Infirmorum Hospital, Belfast, was opened for the winter session, 1937-8, on Wednesday, 20th October, 1937. Mr. Brien J. Moore, F.R.C.S.I., occupied the chair. Dr. Douglas Boyd, hon. radiologist to the hospital, delivered the inaugural lecture, which we hope to publish in the next issue of the Journal. There was a large attendance of the honorary medical staff, with the nursing staffs and students.